

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1 – 12 and 14 - 18 are presently pending.

### **Response to Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102**

#### **Rejection under FR 2521408 (FR'408)**

Claims 9 – 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by FR'408. FR'408 discloses an electrically heated suitcase that includes an electric heating element placed between the outer protective face and the inner insulate lining. These elements are operable from automotive electric supply systems or from household electric. FR'408 does not disclose a thermostat to control the temperature inside of the suitcase.

Claims 9 – 11 and 14 now include this limitation that was included in claims 5 and 14. US'471 was cited as disclosing this limitation in a portable heated case. US'471 discloses a controlled temperature food carrier that uses a thermostat to ensure that the inner temperature is maintained at a minimum of 145 degrees Fahrenheit. It does not prevent the temperature from rising above a maximum temperature. There is an enormous difference between maintaining a minimum temperature for transporting food and a system for drying equipment. The food in US'471 is only being transported a relatively short time, and if the temperature rises, the food merely becomes slightly overcooked. In the present invention, expensive equipment may be permanently damaged by overheating. The US'471 does not disclose, suggest or teach maintaining the temperature within a finite specified range to ensure the safety of the equipment while allowing it to be properly dried.

### **Response to Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103**

Claims 1 – 3 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over FR'408 in view of US'401. FR'408 does not disclose, suggest or teach a system that uses a center panel with a heating element. US'401 is cited as disclosing a center panel with a heating element. It is noted however that US'401 discloses a partition with a heating element draped

over it. There is no heating element contained within a center panel, nor is there any suggestion for doing so. The heating element disclosed in US'401 is used to warm textile garments whereas the heating element in the present invention is used to dry wet equipment, such as wetsuits, boots, etc. This wetness would short out the heating element in US'401. Thus it is critical to mount the heating element within the center panel. US'401 teaches away from this by merely draping the heating element over the center partition and along the sides.

Claims 5 and 13 were rejected in view of combinations of FR'408 and US'471 to arrive at the claimed limitation of a thermostat. However as discussed above, US'471 does not disclose a thermostat that will maintain the temperature of the heating element within a specified finite range to prevent damage to the equipment.

Claims 4 and 12 were indicated as having allowable subject matter and have been rewritten in independent format. The applicant greatly appreciates this indication of allowable subject matter.

The pending claims are now considered to be in condition for allowance. The Applicant hereby respectfully requests that those claims be indicated as allowable at the earliest possible time.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if further discussions would advance the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

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